

Joy to the World

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[0 : 00] Take Your Bibles, go with me to Luke chapter 2. It is about the cross. It's about Jesus coming to die for us. A beautiful song. I've really enjoyed that. Take Your Bible, go with me to Luke 2. And guys, I hope we'll put up the words to you on the screen here of joy to the world.

I asked them to sing that first today because I want to talk to you about that song. I think it expresses so well what goes on in the scripture when we talk about Christmas. Look at a joy to the world.

Joy to the world, the Lord is come. And that one sentence right there could be an entire month of preaching. You know, why in the world did we need so much joy?

Why did we need joy? Because there was pain. And you're going to find out in the song he's even going to talk about how the world's under a curse. The curse came because of sin. And sin in the beginning, the earth was cursed and man was separated from God.

But God loved you enough that Jesus came to die on a cross for all of us. Amen? And so it's joy. He comes to give salvation and his joy to the world. He comes to save anyone who will put their faith and trust in him.

[1 : 03] The next thing it says is the Lord is come. He is the Lord. I think sometimes we take that word rather flippantly. We say Lord and Christ and both of those are simply titles.

He is the Lord, Jesus Christ. His human name is Jesus. But Lord means he is king. Lord means he is God. Lord means he rules. And what happens is the king is coming.

The king, Jesus, is the Lord. He's the one who came and was God made flesh there. The Lord is come. The song makes that clear. It says let earth receive her king.

Look at that. Let earth receive her king. Skip down to the next verse if you would. Joy to the world. The Savior reigns. You know what reigns before the Savior reigns?

Death. We face that. Every human being faces that. There was a death in our family this week. There was a death in other families this week. In our church, there was death everywhere around this world.

[2 : 02] We were over in, we were in New York City just a few days ago. We're riding down the road in New York City. And one of the people in the car said, I haven't seen any graveyards. And I said, well, you hadn't been watching. And then all of a sudden we went by a graveyard built to hold a city in it.

Because they die everywhere. But now death doesn't have to reign. The Savior can reign. You're going to die. You're going to die. You can die once or you can die twice.

You can die once because physically unless the rapture happens, we're all going to die. But that second death is reserved for those who do not receive Jesus Christ as their Savior. I hope that you will trust him and let him be your Savior.

Go to the next verse. No more let sin. Look at this. No more let sins and sorrow grow. Thank God. What happened in the garden was Adam and Eve sinned against God.

And when they sinned against God, the earth was cursed. And all of a sudden, the thorns infested the ground. And the curse came on the earth. And so man lived by the sweat of his brow.

[3 : 01] And women had pain and childbirth. And a lot of different things happened. But when the Lord comes, when he comes to set up his kingdom. And the truth is, he comes and you can be forgiven.

And the curse can be overcome. I want you to show that next part where it says curse. He said that. You're probably saying that and never think about that. He comes to make his blessings flow far as the curse is found.

The curse is you're dying. You're dying. We all die. The curse is this earth is under the curse. The curse is we're far from God. The curse.

But Jesus came. Next verse, if you would have skipped it. He rules the world with truth and grace. That's going to happen in his millennial kingdom when that time comes. But, you know, sin rules and kills.

The thief came but for to steal, to kill, and to destroy. John chapter 10. But Jesus has come that you can have life and have it more abundantly. So we come to Christmas time. We start thinking about Christmas.

[3 : 59] And we sing joy to the world. And that's really about Jesus setting up his kingdom. But the truth is, there is joy because you know Jesus. And if you're here and you know him as your personal savior, you ought to be excited about that.

Well, I can't think about Christmas without thinking about world evangelism. I'm just going to be honest with you. The verse says, the verse says, look at Luke chapter 2 and verse 10 if you would. The verse says in Luke chapter 2 and verse 10.

And the angel said unto them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Good tidings of great joy.

Let's just think about that in just a second. You know what was happening? God was allowing the world to know that he was sending his grace to this world. What's grace? Now, you do realize that all of us have sinned.

And all of us, all humans, deserve to die and go to hell. There's a place prepared for those who reject God. There's a place for those who choose self over God.

[4 : 59] There's a place for those who do not trust Jesus Christ as their savior. The Bible word for it is lake of fire or hell. And that's a horrible place. But Jesus came that you could know that there can be salvation.

So the angels are there in Luke chapter 2 and verse 13. And the Bible says, suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, glory to God in the highest and on earth peace and goodwill toward men.

You know what made those angels so happy? They knew from eternity past, although they weren't all the way back in eternity, but before the creation of the world, they knew that God loved you and that God was making a plan to save you.

And even when man fell in the garden and the angels were looking and they see man sinning against God, the angels were looking and saying, you guys, God's good. Why would you rebel against him? Why would you sin against him?

Why would you not be saved? And man rebelled against him. And the angels are like, God, what are you going to do? And God's like, I'm going to save him. I'm going to send Jesus to die for him. I'm going to send my son. He's going to die on a cross for him.

[5 : 57] And all of a sudden, after all these 4,000 years, the angels are like, it's happening. It's happening. Jesus is coming to the earth. That was foreshadowed all through your Old Testament. Every time they offered a sacrifice, it was about Jesus dying.

Every time a lamb was slain, it was about Jesus dying. And the angels are like, strike up the band. Sing the song. The Savior has really come to the earth. Look at Luke chapter 2 and verse 20.

The shepherds were excited. And they returned glorifying and praising God for all they'd seen and all they'd heard and all that was told to them. I don't know if you realize it, but even in New Testament days, they knew what was happening.

They knew that Jesus being born in Bethlehem was a whole lot more than a whole lot about a baby. They knew it was a lot more than about a little baby in a manger or a Christmas time, as you might call it.

If you look at Luke chapter 2 and verse 30, you got your Bible open there. In Luke chapter 2 and verse 30, there's this guy named Simeon. And he's old and decrepit. And he's just been asking God to let him live long enough to see all the promises come true.

[7 : 01] He's just been asking God, can I be around when you do it? And all of a sudden, look at Luke 2.30. He said, mine eyes have seen thy salvation. You know what that salvation was? He was holding a baby.

You know what that baby was? That's Jesus. That's the salvation. Salvation can be found in no other. It's only in Jesus Christ. The Bible says, Jesus said to them, I'm the way, the truth, and the life.

No man comes to the Father but by me. The Bible says there's no other name given among men whereby we must be saved. It's only the name of Jesus. Look at Luke chapter 2 verse 30 again.

Mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people. I want you to see something. You need to underline. If you've got your Bible, you ought to have your Bible open because we're studying the Word of God.

And I want you to underline, if you would, in chapter 2 and verse 31. Thou hast prepared. Underline, hast prepared. Now, you need to understand something. And all over the world, everybody's trying to figure out how to get things right with God.

[8 : 01] Every people has made a religious way to solve the problem with God. And so you have Hindus and you have Buddhists and you have thousands and thousands of gods.

And every man's like, we know something's wrong. We know somehow we need to make things right with God. But I don't know how to go about it. So they come up with a religion. But here's what the Bible says. You prepared.

Underline that in your Bible. You see, you want things right. You want to get things right. You want forgiveness of your sins. You want to know what's wrong inside of you. That vacuum in you that needs to be filled.

And you're worried about that. But before you ever worried about it, he worried about it. And Jesus, that's God's plan, God's way of getting salvation. And I want you to look at this, underline it in your Bible.

For the face of all people. Thank God he loves white people and black people and every other color of people on the planet. He loves the whole color spectrum of people.

[8 : 59] He loves all people, whether they're Jewish people or Gentile people. He loves people, whether they're North American or South American or Asian or European or African. He loves all people everywhere.

He loves everybody, all people. That's what the scripture is. That's pretty good stuff, isn't it? So the Bible said in that passage of scripture, the Bible said, good tidings of great joy.

How in the world can I get things fixed? How in the world could I get things right? I've been listening to a book this week about Charles Spurgeon.

He was a great preacher, a British preacher. And as a little boy, he found out about hell. And his granddaddy explained to him, it was like a bottomless pit where you fall and you never quit falling.

And he said, well, can't you reach the bottom? And he said, you go so far down, you can't see the top, but you're still nowhere near the bottom. And then he talked about the wrath of God that abode on people and how people are going to die and go to hell.

[10:01] And it scared him. He has a friend who's actually a slave living in Virginia that will later on become a missionary after he graduates from his Bible college. At the same time he's over here experiencing that, this little kid is experiencing fear of the devil and fear of dying and fear of going to hell.

Because every one of us, no matter what part of the globe we're on, we know there's something wrong. That's why they make up religion. That's why everybody's got a way to fix it. That's why everybody's got, somehow they may even say, I don't believe in God.

And that way, maybe I can calm things down and I don't have to feel that. Or I'm a humanist and I only believe in what I feel. But whatever they're doing, they're always trying to fix a problem they got. And they don't know they got it, but they got it.

Don't even know why they got it, but they got it. And our preachers stand in countries all over the world and people hear the gospel and say, that's joy to the world. Here's man drowning it in drunkenness or drowning it in riches.

But there's only one answer and that is Jesus. And that's what this story is about. Good tidings of great joy. But then I want you to look at the last part of the verse. I know you're probably, if you come to vision, you're like, good night.

[11:07] That guy could find world evangelism in any verse of the Bible. I plead guilty. Somebody said, is there world evangelism in Genesis 1.1? Yeah. In the beginning, God created heaven and the earth.

You know what that means? He's in charge and you need to get saved. And if the world belongs to him, let's get the gospel to him. Say amen. He started out owning it. Why doesn't he own it now? Let's scare him the gospel. Look at this.

You got to circle it in your Bible. All people. Would you circle that? All people. God doesn't have a racist bone in him. God doesn't have a racist bone in him.

God doesn't look at any people and think poorly of them. God wants them all saved. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. And whosoever believes in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Now look at Luke 2.10. Let's read it again. The angel said unto them, fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. Now when you read that, you're like, man, the Old Testament was kind of dark and everybody's dying back there and things were hard back there.

[12:09] And finally, you're in the New Testament and joy to the world. It's going to be great because Jesus has come and the New Testament's different than the Old Testament. Actually, it's not. You just didn't read the Old Testament right.

And your preacher didn't explain the Old Testament right to you. But those people in the temple knew the Old Testament. And I want you to look, if you would, with me at Psalm chapter 67 and verse 2. Write that down. Look it up later if you need to. But look at this verse.

When they sang joy to the world, when they say all this is going to happen, there's good tidings to all people. You don't need to think that God didn't think about everybody until the New Testament. He thought about everybody in the Old Testament.

And I'm going to show you that in the Bible today. In Psalm chapter 67 and verse 2, the Bible says, That thy way may be known upon earth. Now, upon earth.

Not upon Israel. Not upon the United States of America. Not on Georgia. Not on Alpharetta. But upon earth. That's enough. We can stop the verse right there. But in case you didn't understand that, he explains it further.

[13 : 08] So you'll get it. He said earth. In case you don't know that, thy saving health among all what? How many people does he want to hear the gospel? All nations. All nations.

That's the Cherokee Nation. That's the Iroquois Nation. That's the American Nation. That's every group of people, every kind of people all over the world. He wants them all to know.

All nations. What's he want them to know? Looking at the verse for me, aren't you? Look what he wants them to know. Saving health. You're dying. One of the interesting things about getting older is your body don't do what it used to do.

And to some of you younger people, you're like 40 and you're already starting to figure it out. Just wait until you're 60. You're really going to know it. And we need some saving health. But your body's not the issue.

Your body can wear out. You're going to live somewhere forever. No one stops existing at death. You need to listen to this.

[14 : 08] You're standing at the casket. And somebody told you, well, she's in the clouds now. And when the wind blows and you feel it on your face, that's mama talking to you.

Oh, mama's somewhere. And everybody's somewhere. And they're somewhere forever. You got a chance in this earth to make a decision about where you'll spend forever. And here's the question.

You need to understand, if you accept Jesus Christ as your Savior, if you put your faith and trust in what He did on the cross at Calvary, not your own righteousness, as the girl was saying about that just a second ago, not your own righteousness, not righteousness you find in you, but righteousness you find in Christ, you can have eternal life.

You can be made a new creature. Old things are passed away. Behold, all things are become new. He makes a difference in you. He saves you. And then you get to go to His presence forever and ever.

You say, oh, that's fantasy. Yeah, well, it's probably fantasy for you that there's a God who created everything. And you probably think it all happened like an accident. I could see you walking through the Amazon jungle, which I have done, and coming up on a watch like my Apple Watch, laying on the ground, and you'd look at it and say, wow, the elements have been at work here.

[15 : 14] They've all been banging against each other, and somehow they formed an Apple Watch, and it works. It even connects to the internet. Praise the Lord. No, you'd look at that and say, I think somebody smart's been here, but dumb enough to drop a watch.

Say, man. Come on. And see, there is a God in heaven, and the Bible is true. And by the way, in your heart of hearts, you know that you're not going to die, and it's all over. You know you're not a dog.

You know you're not an animal. You know in the pit of your heart that you're going to live forever. The nations need saving health. Underline that. The psalmist knew that.

Luke chapter 2 and verse 32. Back to Luke. Simeon had known that message was to reach even the pagan nations. Look if you look at Luke chapter 2 and verse 32.

Jesus. He's talking about Jesus, who's just been born in Bethlehem, and now has been brought to the temple. And he says this, a light to lighten the Gentiles. I need you on the line.

[16 : 10] That word Gentiles, I want to explain something to you. You can even circle that word Gentiles and draw a line to the margin of your Bible and write the word pagan. Let me explain to you what a Gentile is. A Gentile is a non-Jewish person.

You say, well, that doesn't help me much. Let me explain to you. In Bible terms and in Bible days, Jewish people had a real God. They had a creator God. They had the God of the Old Testament, the God that in the beginning created the heavens and the earth.

And the Gentile nations or the pagan nations had all gods they created. There's a creator God, and there's gods you create. There's a God who made it all, and there's a God you made.

And you've got little gods, and you move them around, and you respect them, and they're your little idols. You went down to an idol shop on the corner where the guy's getting drunk and fornicating and made you a God. Say, how do you know about that?

I lived in a country where they did it all the time. He came to lighten the Gentiles, the pagans. You know who that is? That's us. We were without God.

[17:10] We were without hope. We were a long ways off. But God came through the person of his son, and he brought salvation to us. And Simeon knew that.

When he saw the baby, he's like, here he is, the one who saves even pagans. He saves even pagans, and the glory of his people, Israel.

If you would, go with me to Isaiah 49.6, or just write that in your Bible. You can look it up later. Simeon wasn't that smart. He'd just been to church. He just had his Bible open, and people taught him.

And so Simeon was actually quoting what God had already said in the Old Testament. Can I just be honest with you? You don't have to be real smart. You just got to read God's book. You don't have, I mean, you're like, how did Simeon know that?

Man, that must have been neat to have that revelation. Well, you got that revelation. You got that revelation. Because here's what Simeon was quoting. Isaiah 49.6 says, And he said, It's a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob to restore the preserved of Israel.

[18:11] I will give light to the Gentiles. All the way back in Isaiah. That thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.

Guess what God was thinking about in the Old Testament? You. Guess what God was thinking about in the Old Testament? China. Guess what God was thinking about in the Old Testament? India. Guess what God was thinking about in the Old Testament?

Indonesia. You. Guess what God was thinking about in the Old Testament? Every person. I heard this. For God so loved the world. That's like the whole thing that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believed in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Salvation. To the end of the earth. To the end of the earth. Look at Isaiah chapter 52 and verse 10. Isaiah knew about this. I love this verse.

This is a great verse. You're going to want to mark this verse in your Bible and you're going to want to remember this verse. The Bible says, The Lord hath made bare his holy arm in the eyes of all the nations.

[19:08] The nations. That's Gentiles again. That's the pagans. That's the people that don't know the God of Israel which is the God of the Bible. And I want you to look. He made bare his holy arm. What he did is he took his coat off.

What he did is he said, this is going to take a little bit of work right here. I'm going to show you my muscle. I have my sons in the room. I guess some of y'all know he likes to lift weights. And when he's in Peru, he calls me and he'll have one of his wife beater's shirts on.

And he says, Hey dad, how you doing? How you doing dad? Notice anything? I said, you're pointing at your head. No dad. You don't see my arms? No. I mean, nothing impressive.

I think your wife has bigger. Look at the verse. Look at the verse. God said, watch this. I'm fixing to take my shirt off and get down to my wife beater. I'm fixing to show you that I can save the world.

I can change the world. Can I get an amen right there? Come on. I don't know how you read that bear the arm. Sometimes I wish David wouldn't bear his, but God took it, showed his holy arm and let everybody see it.

[20 : 09] And here's why. And all the ends of the earth. Look at this old Testament. All the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. That's pretty good.

Well, it has to be pretty good. It's the word of God. That's pretty good. He cares about people from Florida and Georgia, even Ohio. Can I get an amen there?

That's a hard one. He cares about people from South America. He cares about people, all the ends of the earth. All the ends of the earth.

You would, I got another verse for you. Psalm chapter 98 and verse two. God's always wanted the world to know about him and what he's done for all to be saved. That's why our church is so involved in getting the gospel to the world because God cares.

And God's way to get in the gospel to the world is to do it through a church. Psalm chapter 98 and verse two. The Lord hath known, hath made known his salvation. Would you want to line up? He has made known.

[21 : 07] He's made it clear. Hey, hey, look. You can all be saved. Everybody listen. I'm making an announcement. There is salvation in Jesus Christ. Looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith.

He hath made known his salvation. His righteousness hath he openly showed in the sight of, you've got to underline it, heathen. He didn't go to the good people. He didn't go to the, a certain group of people.

He went to the ones that didn't even know about him because he cares about people. There's a person, people say, I don't even believe in God. He said, well, I still love you. He says, I don't believe in God.

And God said, well, I love you. And my son died for you and you can be saved in the sight of the heathen. And verse three, he says, he hath remembered his mercy and his truth toward the house of Israel because they're Israelites and they say, man, God has been good to us.

And then he says, all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Whole world. Now, I want you to know, if you're here today, he loves you.

[22 : 11] If you're saved, you already know that. I want you to know today that if you're here and you've not ever put your trust in Christ, he loves you and he died for you. The whole Bible story, this whole Christmas thing that's going on, it's not about Santa Claus and I mean, I know it is in America.

Everybody in America is thinking about, I need to buy some gifts and credit card companies love it and the stores love it. But you want me to tell you what God loves? You. The whole story is about Jesus dying for you on a cross so you could be saved so you could go to heaven when you die.

So you'd have your sins forgiven so you could have new life. The whole world. And for you that are born again believers, what an awesome privilege and responsibility we get.

I know the good news. I know the good news. Oftentimes in Old Testament, the soldiers would be in battle and they didn't have Twitter and they didn't have cell phones and they couldn't send a selfie or FaceTime and there'd be a battle going on and the king might be over here on the other side and they had messengers and these messengers' job was to run from the battle scene and tell the king what was happening.

And so they would come running up and say, can I take the message? I could even show you the bottles or you don't have time this morning. And they both come up and he said, no, you wait. But this one guy said, I'll take the message and this other guy kept standing there and said, I'd like to take the message.

- [23 : 22] The second guy outran the first guy and got there with the message. Here's the whole deal and we have the good news. We know anybody can be saved. We know that the darkest heathen and the darkest tribe on the planet that's never heard of the God of the Bible can be saved if we take the Bible.

Jesus has died for him so he can be saved. Let me show you proof of that and we're through. Luke 2, 14. God extends peace and goodwill to all men. Luke chapter 2 and verse 14 if you would.

Glory to God in the highest and that is what we all say. Everybody in this room ought to be saying, glory to God. Thank God nobody makes me do stuff to go to heaven. Amen? Thank God we didn't come to church this morning to get loaded up with a bunch of junk you got to do.

I saw a picture in another country and this guy was beating himself and he said, God see my suffering and forgive my sin and I used to tell people when they saw that picture they don't have to see my suffering they get to see Jesus' suffering.

Glory to God and on earth peace. God wants you to know peace. God wants you to be able to lay down at night and know things are okay. My family member may be dying I may be dying but if they know Jesus Christ peace.

- [24 : 34] Death is coming. goodwill toward men. Somebody said that means go out and be nice to people but I'll tell you what it means I think it means that God said I like you guys I got a goodwill towards you I want you to be saved.

You see world evangelism is not an afterthought for God. It's not like God came up and said or it's not like the apostles got together after Jesus died and said oh he died what are we going to do now let's make up a plan. If you read the Bible he's had that plan since the very beginning.

He wants the world to know and you need to know that salvation is simply a gift you need to receive. It's a gift. Here's a great Bible verse for the wages of sin is death.

If you get what you deserve you will die and you will go to hell. The wages of sin you do wrong you live in rebellion you live in self-will or making up your own mind about what you're going to do you will die and you will go to hell.

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Now you need to understand God's gift is not for everybody any way they want it for the gift of God but the gift of God is eternal life but it comes a certain way it comes through Jesus Christ.

- [25 : 53] The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. God that's how people get saved people get saved because Jesus is the Savior you're celebrating Christmas you need to remember something joy to the world the Savior has come joy to the world I can have a new life my past can be washed away my past can not only be washed away it can be replaced behold all things are made new when you get born again God doesn't fix your future he fixes your past your present and your future he goes back and wipes away all the junk you did in the past nails it to the cross and says taken care of forgotten washed away if anybody ever asked it's time to go over and check where I put it on my cross and then he changes your present gives you a whole new life right now and he changes your future and if we believe in that we have the privilege of getting the gospel to the world to everyone and I thank God you do that

I thank God you're a church that wants to invite people I thank God we got Chinese people with us today I am so excited to have them here I thank God that we have every nationality that we have in our church I thank God for every new person that shows up in our church because we want everybody to know Jesus I thank God that we send missionaries our young people surrender their lives and take the gospel around the world and you take the gospel around the community the curse of sin brought death and hell but Jesus brought salvation and not everybody gets saved I need to make that real clear the story doesn't end well for everyone there's a teaching that's called universalism which means that in the end he'll save everybody it's not ever taught in the Bible in the Bible here's what's taught all universally can be saved but they must hear and believe they must hear and believe so you came this morning you can't leave flippantly and say well I thank God he's going to fix everything he's only going to fix it if you'll turn to him if you'll trust him if you'll look to him he'll save you and forgive you and as a church we have to continue training our young people we have to continue praying that the whole world can hear the gospel and we can get the gospels of the world we have to keep giving because it's joy to the world it's not joy to

Alpharetta it's not joy to vision it's joy to the world our Savior has come